

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 DHA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 VO-03 CA-01 INSE-00 ABF-01
OMB-01 TRSE-00 /082 W
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R 142351Z SEP 77
FM JSMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5359
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 USUN 3029

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG,UNGA, JA, US, VM
SUBJ: US-JAPAN PRE-UNGA CONSULTATIONS -- VIETNAMESE REFUGEES

SUMMARY:DURING COURSE OF OUR CONSULTATIONS WITH JAPANESE
SEPTEMBER 9, SUBJECT OF JAPAN'S TREATMENT OF VIETNAMESE
REFUGEES CAME UP. ALTHOUGH THIS WAS NOT ON AGREED
AGENDA FOR TALKS, UN AFFAIRS DIR GEN OKAWA WAS PREPARED
TO SPEAK ON SUBJECT. HE PROVIDED AN INFORMAL MEMORANDUM
DATED AUGUST 1, 1977 SUMMARIZING JAPANESE ACTIONS ON THESE
REFUGEES, WHICH IS TRANSMITTED AT END OF THIS MESSAGE.
END SUMMARY.

1. OKAWA SAID THAT JAPAN HAS ALLOWED 1,125VIETNAMESE REFUGEES
TO ENTER JAPAN ON A TEMPORARY BASIS. OF THESE, 340 HAVE BEEN
SUCCESSFUL IN FINDING PERMANENT LOCATION IN THIRD COUNTRIES.
785 ARE STILL IN JAPAN.

2. WHEN REFUGEES ARRIVED IN JAPAN ON BOARD JAPANESE VESSEL,
THEY WERE GIVEN TEMPORARY LANDING PERMITS. UNHCR PROVIDED
INTERIM LIVING EXPENSES AND FUNDS FOR TRAVEL TO THIRD COUNTRY.
UNHCR, OF COURSE, ALSO COMMUNICATES WITH THIRD COUNTRIES IN
AN EFFORT TO ARRANGE PERMANENT LOCATIONS. IN GENERAL, SAME
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PROCEDURES APPLY TO REFUGEES ARRIVING IN JAPAN ON BOARD
FOREIGN VESSELS, EXCEPT THAT UNHCR INITIALLY APPROACHES
THE GOVERNMENT OF REGISTRY OF VESSEL. OKAWA SAID GOJ IS
CURRENTLY ISSUING 30-DAY ENTRY PERMITS TO REFUGEES, WHICH
HAVE BEEN EXTENDED WHEN NECESSARY WITHOUT FURTHER PROCEDURAL
REQUIREMENTS.

3. OKAWA SAID THAT THREE JAPANESE RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS WERE HELPING WITH SHELTER FOR THE REFUGEES. JAPANESE RED CROSS ALSO IS PROVIDING SOME MONEY AND FOOD AND SHELTER ASSISTANCE; HE NOTED THAT JAPANESE RED CROSS RECENTLY SPECIFICALLY PICKED UP TWENTY OR TWENTY-ONE REFUGEES FOR THIS KIND OF ASSISTANCE.

4. OKAWA NOTED THAT GOJ HAS PROVIDED A SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION TO UNHCR TO HELP WITH REFUGEES IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA (THAILAND). IN ITS NEXT BUDGET CYCLE, THE GOJ IS ASKING FOR APPROXIMATELY 1.2 MILLION DOLLARS FOR THIS PURPOSE NEXT YEAR.

5. OKAWA ALSO REPORTED THAT FOREIGN OFFICE HAS ASKED JUSTICE MINISTRY TO AMEND PRESENT LEGAL LIMIT OF 30 DAYS FOR DURATION OF STAY IN JAPAN OF REFUGEES. GOJ IS ALSO CONSIDERING ADOPTION OF A POLICY PERMITTING REFUGEES TO REMAIN IN JAPAN PERMANENTLY. OKAWA NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT THIS LATTER POLICY CHANGE WOULD PRESENT SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES TO GOJ BOTH LEGALLY AND POLITICALLY. HE SAID IT IS NOT ONLY A QUESTION OF WHETHER JAPAN CAN ACCEPT A FEW HUNDRED VIETNAMESE IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. TOTAL CONTEXT IN WHICH JAPANESE MUST CONSIDER THESE QUESTIONS IS BASICALLY SET BY FACT OF OVER SIX-HUNDRED THOUSAND KOREANS ALREADY POSING SERIOUS SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS IN JAPAN. GOJ, LOOKING DOWN THE ROAD, MUST ALSO BEAR IN MIND THAT JAPAN CONCEIVABLY

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COULD BE REQUIRED TO ACCEPT LARGE NUMBERS OF REFUGEES FROM BOTH SOUTH KOREA AND TAIWAN.

6. OKAWA CONCLUDED HIS REMARKS BY OBSERVING THAT JAPAN OBVIOUSLY HAS ACKNOWLEDGED A MEASURE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONSTRUCTIVE ASSISTANCE WITH VIETNAMESE REFUGEE PROBLEM AND IS ENDEAVORING TO IMPROVE UPON ITS PRACTICAL PERFORMANCE IN EVERY WAY POSSIBLE.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 USUN 3029

7. TEXT OF INFORMAL MEMORANDUM PASSED BY OKAWA FOLLOWS:

AUGUST 1, 1977

THE HANDLING OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES ARRIVING IN JAPANESE
PORTS ABOARD COMMERCIAL VESSELS

THERE WAS AN ARTICLE IN A PROMINENT AMERICAN NEWSPAPER
OF JUNE 8, 1977 CONCERNING JAPAN'S RECENT HANDLING OF
VIETNAMESE REFUGEES. IT STATED THAT A GROUP OF VIETNAMESE
REFUGEES, RESCUED BY A LIBERIAN-REGISTERED
SHIP, LOS ANDES, HAD BEEN REFUSED LANDING RIGHTS IN JAPAN.

THAT ARTICLE DOES NOT REPRESENT THE WHOLE PICTURE OF
THIS PROBLEM. IN FACT, ON JUNE 13, THESE REFUGEES WERE
ALLOWED TO LAND ON A TEMPORARY BASIS.

ON 35 SEPARATE OCCASIONS VIETNAMESE REFUGEES HAVE BEEN
ALLOWED TO LAND IN JAPAN, WHILE ON ONLY THREE OCCASIONS
HAVE THEY BEEN UNABLE TO DO SO. ALL TOLD, 864 REFUGEES HAVE
BEEN ALLOWED TO LAND AGAINST 38 WHO PROCEEDED TO OTHER DESTINATIONS.
OF THESE 864, 513 WERE RESCUED BY JAPANESE SHIPS.

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UNDER EXISTING JAPANESE IMMIGRATION REGULATIONS, REFUGEES
ARE ALLOWED TO REMAIN IN JAPAN FOR 30 DAYS BEFORE
PROCEEDING TO THEIR ULTIMATE DESTINATION. IN FACT, HOWEVER,
THIS PERIOD IS EXTENDED UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE REFUGEES HAVE
FOUND A PERMANENT PLACE TO LIVE. OF THE 864 REFUGEES SO FAR
ALLOWED TO ENTER JAPAN, 335 HAVE ALREADY LEFT THE COUNTRY FOR
A PERMANENT LIVING PLACE AND 529 ARE STILL STAYING IN JAPAN.

WHILE IN JAPAN THESE REFUGEES LIVE IN FACILITIES OF
RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS WHICH WORK CLOSELY WITH THE UNITED
NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR). RECENTLY,
THE JAPAN RED CROSS HAS ALSO JOINED THE EFFORTS OF PROVIDING
FACILITIES. THERE HAVE BEEN LITTLE OR NO COMPLAINTS

BY THE REFUGEES REGARDING THEIR TREATMENT.

JAPAN CONTRIBUTES SUBSTANTIALLY TO THE BUDGET OF THE UNHCR, WHICH ASSUMES THE FUNCTION OF PROVIDING INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION TO REFUGEES. IN ADDITION TO JAPAN'S REGULAR ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNHCR, IT HAS MADE AN ADDITIONAL \$1,860,000 DONATION SINCE 1975 FOR THE UNHCR SPECIAL OPERATIONS FOR DISPLACED PERSONS FROM INDO-CHINA OUTSIDE THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN; THIS IS ONE OF THE HIGHEST SUCH SPECIAL DONATIONS AMONG THE MAJOR NATIONS.

THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT POLICY IS TO PERMIT VIETNAMESE REFUGEES FOR HUMANITARIAN REASONS TO REMAIN ON A TEMPORARY BASIS IN JAPAN AS LONG AS FACILITIES ARE AVAILABLE, AND HAS ACTIVELY SOUGHT WORKING SOLUTIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED. SOME INSTANCES WHEN THERE HAVE BEEN DELAYS IN THE LANDING OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IN JAPAN, AS IN THE CASE OF THE LOS ANDES, HAVE RESULTED FROM COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTIES AMONG THE NATIONS DIRECTLY CONCERNED. THE LOS ANDES, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS SWISS-OWNED
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BUT UNDER LIBERIAN REGISTRY, AND BOTH THESE GOVERNMENTS AS WELL AS THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENTS HAD TO BE BROUGHT INTO COMMUNICATION TO RESOLVE THE TECHNICAL QUESTIONS INVOLVED. IN OTHER INSTANCES; SHIPS HAD TO PROCEED TO OTHER DESTINATIONS WITH REFUGEES BECAUSE OF DELAYS IN COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE COMPANIES TO WHICH THE SHIPS BELONG AND THE GOVERNMENTS WHERE THE SHIPS ARE REGISTERED.
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